

The Arabic concludes thus: — “The discipline of Solomon written out by the friends of Hezekiah, king of Judah, the interpretation or translation of which is extremely difficult, (but) is now completed by the assistance and influence of the Son of God.”

IN the introduction to the book of Proverbs, among the several collections of a similar nature which are mentioned there, I have referred to M. Galand’s *Maximes des Orientaux*. From this work, as contained in the supplement to the *Bibliothèque Orientale*, I have translated the following selection. They will serve to show the curious reader how many sayings similar to those of Solomon still abound in the East.

ASIATIC PROVERBS

I fear God; and beside him I fear none, but that man who fears him not.

He who knows not his Maker cannot know himself.

Godliness is the greatest wisdom, and implety the greatest of follies.

The fear of God is the greatest safeguard.

To sin once is too much; but a thousand acts of devotion towards God are not sufficient to honor him.

If a man foresaw his end, and his exit from life, he would abhor his actions, and their deceitfulness.

Life is a sort of sleep, from which many awake not but in death.

The life of man is a path that leads to death.

The orphan is not the person who has lost his father; but he who has neither wisdom, nor a good education.

Want of good sense is worse than all the degrees of poverty.

Nothing so effectually hides what we are as silence.

He who has least wisdom has most vanity.

There is no greatness of soul in avenging one’s self.

The heart of the fool is in his mouth, and the tongue of the wise man is in his heart.

He who runs with a slack rein, guided only by hope, encounters the last moment of his life, and falls.

Envy has no rest.

When you have once received a benefit, render yourself not unworthy of it, by a want of gratitude.

The desire of revenge is a constant hinderance to a happy and contented life.

When you have got an advantage over your enemy, pardon him, in returning God thanks for that advantage.

When you are in prosperity, you need seek no other revenge against him who envies you than the mortification he has from it.

How advantageous must wisdom be to its possessor, seeing it is of so great value as not to be purchased by money!

Nothing obtains pardon more speedily than repentance.

There is no disease so dangerous as the want of common sense.

Of all vices, vanity and a love of contention are the most difficult to be corrected.

Visiting your neighbor is no crime, but your visits should not be so often repeated, as to induce him to say, It is enough.

If a prince would worship God in truth, he must remain in his limits, be true to his treaties, be content with what he has, and suffer patiently the privation of what he has not.

Nothing so much resembles flowers planted on a dunghill, as the good which is done to an ignorant or worthless man.

In whatsoever company or society you be, engage not in those matters which concern the whole; for if you succeed, the whole company will attribute the success to itself; and if you succeed not, each person will lay the blame on you.

When the soul is ready to depart, what avails it whether a man die on a throne or in the dust?

Take and give with equity.

We need not be surprised when those who ask or seek for improper things, fall into misfortunes which they did not expect.

Riches dwell no longer in the hand of a liberal man, than patience in the heart of a lover, or water in a sieve.

As soon as a person takes pleasure in hearing slander, he is to be ranked in the number of slanderers.

That which a man suffers for this world, fills his heart with darkness; but that which he suffers for the other, fills it with light.

The greatest repose which a man can enjoy, is that which he feels in desiring nothing.

One seldom finds that which he seeks, when he searches for it with impatience.

Do not reproach a man for the sin which he has committed, when God has forgiven him.

He who pushes a jest farther than good breeding requires, shall never fail to be hated or despised.

He who is worthy of being called a man, is unshaken in adversity, humble in prosperity, active and bold in danger; and, if he be not learned, has at least a love for learning.

The man who is governed by his passions is in a worse state than the most miserable slave.

Men often give themselves much trouble to succeed in an affair from which they derive only vexation in the end.

He is a free man who desires nothing; and he is a slave who expects that which he wishes.

The advice of a wise man is to be considered as a prediction.

Be sincere, though your sincerity should cost you your life.

Live not on credit, and you shall live in liberty.

A wise man practises the three following things: he abandons the world before it abandons him; he builds his sepulchre before the time of entering

it; and he does all with a design to please God, before entering into his presence.

He who lords it over those who are below him, shall one day find a master who will lord it over him.

Sin not, if you would have less vexation in the hour of death.

He who takes not counsel beforehand, will surely fail in accomplishing his projects.

Covetousness leads to poverty; but he is truly rich who desires nothing.

He who relates the faults of others to you, designs to relate yours to them.

Watch your friends; except those of whom you are certain; but know, that none can be a true friend but he who has the fear of God.

The most perfect pleasures in this world are always mingled with some bitterness.

He who considers consequences with too much attention, is ordinarily a man of no courage.

The world is the hell of the good, and the heaven of the wicked; i.e., it is all the evil that the former shall meet with, and all the good that the latter shall enjoy.

By doing good to those who have evil intentions against you, you thereby shut their mouth.

He who knows well what he is capable of, has seldom bad success.

He who has too good an opinion of himself, drives all others away from him.

He who loves jesting and raillery, brings himself into many troubles.

Partial knowledge is better than total ignorance; if you cannot get what you wish, get what you can.

He who has lost shame may bury his heart.

The poor should get learning in order to become rich; and the rich should acquire it for their ornament.

A man should accommodate himself to the weakness of his inferiors, in order to derive from them the services he requires.

An avaricious man runs straight into poverty. He leads a life of poverty here below; but he must give the account of a rich man in the day of judgment.

The greatest advantage that a man can procure for his children, is to have them well educated.

Do good to him who does you evil, and by this means you will gain the victory over him.

Men, because of speech, have the advantage over brutes; but beasts are preferable to men whose language is indecent.

If you can do good to-day, defer it not till tomorrow.

The excellence of many discourses consists in their brevity.

Two things are inseparable from lying; many promises and many excuses.

Deceivers, liars, and all persons who lead an irregular life, are intoxicated by the prosperity which smiles upon them in all things; but that intoxication is the just recompense of their evil actions.

He lives in true repose who bridles his passions.

It is in vain to expect these five things from the following persons: A present from a poor man; service from a lazy man; succor from an enemy; counsel from an envious man; and true love from a prude.

It is unbecoming the character of a wise man to commit the fault for which he reproves others.

A passionate man is capable of nothing; how unfit then is such a person for a governor!

A rich man who is not liberal, resembles a tree without fruit.

You cannot keep your own secret; what cause then have you to complain, if another to whom you have declared it should reveal it?

It is the same with the administration of the affairs of kings as with sea voyages; you may lose, gain, amass treasures, and lose your life.

He who submits to a voluntary poverty neither possesses, nor is possessed by, any thing.

A wicked man should be considered as dead while he is alive; but a good man lives even in the tomb.

No man should undertake any thing till he has thoroughly examined it.

He who possesses any art or science, is at least equal to a great lord.

Honours, employments, and dignities cannot recompense a man for the pains he has taken to acquire them.

On many occasions a good book supplies the place of an agreeable companion.

That day in which a man neither does some good action, nor acquires some useful knowledge, should not be (if possible) numbered in the days of his life.

He who is of a surly and unyielding disposition, never fails to excite troubles even among relatives and friends.

A great monarch should fix a good reputation as an object to which he should continually bend his pursuits; because, of all the grandeurs and eminences of this world, this is the only thing that shall survive him.

Leave not till to-morrow what you can perform to-day.

To have pity on one's enemy, when he is in distress, is the mark of a great soul.

He who does good shall not lose his reward. A good action never perishes, neither before God nor before men.

Covetousness proceeds ad infinitum; therefore, determine the bounds of your desires, and the objects of your pursuits. He who does not act thus shall never become either rich or happy.

A monarch who considers his own interest should ever abide in his kingdom, and consider himself as a rose in the midst of a garden, which continually reposes on thorns.

Never despise a man because his employment is mean, or his clothing bad. The bee is an insect which is not very pleasing to the sight, yet its hive affords abundance of honey.

The people enjoy repose when governed by princes who take none. The monarch who watches causes his people to repose in safety.

Confer your opinion with that of another, for truth is more easily discovered by two than one.

Do not rejoice at the death of your enemy; your life is not eternal.

Be always employed, that ye become not slothful, and refer to God all that you acquire by labor, otherwise you shall live in a continual and condemnable idleness.

It is extremely difficult to render him wise who knows nothing; because his ignorance causes him to believe that he knows more than he who attempts to instruct him.

One coat, one house, and one day's food, is enough for you; and should you die at noonday, you will have one half too much.

A covetous man is an enemy to all the poor; and is cursed both in this and the coming world.

Interested friends resemble dogs in public places, who love the bones better than those who throw them.

In order to live well, a man should die to all his passions and every thing that depends on them.

A thousand years of delight do not deserve the risk of our lives for a single moment.

You shall only receive in proportion to what you give.

The service of kings may be compared to a vast sea, where many merchants traffic, some of whom acquire great riches, and others are shipwrecked.

Fear the man who fears you.

Do nothing without design.

Humble yourself in asking, that you may be raised up in obtaining what you request.

A wicked woman in the house of a good man is a hell to him in this world.

It cannot be said of a miser that he possesses his riches, however attached he may be to them.

The thought of evil frequently derives its origin from idleness.

Kings and subjects are equally unhappy, where persons of merit are despised, and where ignorant men occupy the chief places of trust.

Answer those who ask questions of you in such a manner as not to offend them.

The most proper method of punishing an envious person is, to load him with benefits.

Prudence suffers between impossibility and irresolution.

When you speak, let it be in such a manner as not to require an explanation.

The most precious acquisition is that of a friend.

Never trust to appearance. Behold the drum: notwithstanding all its noise, it is empty within.

Keep not an evil conscience: but be diffident, to the end that you be never surprised nor deceived.

Nothing remains with punishment or reward.

A wise man by his speeches does things which a hundred armies conjoined could not execute.

Do not speak till you have thought on what you intend to say.

Those who believe they may gain by seditions and commotions never fail to excite them.

The best friends we have in this world are the spies of our actions, who publish our faults.

Hope for nothing from this world, and your soul will enjoy rest.

He who applies himself to acquire knowledge, puts himself in the capacity of possessing all good things.

He who does not succeed in the business in which he is employed, because he is incapable of it, deserves to be excused; for it is to be believed that he has done all he could to accomplish his end.

Every kind of employment requires a particular sort of genius.

Riches increase in proportion as you give to the poor.

The greatest reputation is frequently an embarrassment.

Do not despise a poor man because he is such: the lion is not less noble because he is chained.

A young man who has the wisdom of an old man is considered as an old man among those who are wise.

A righteous prince is the image and shadow of God upon earth.

As soon as virtue begins to discover itself, vice begins its insolent insults.

Can it be said that a man has wisely considered what he has done, when the end corresponds not with what he proposed?

To the end that what you desire may be advantageous too you, never desire any thing but that which is proper for you.

Those who will not forgive an offense are the most accursed of all men.

Though it be pretended that no man can shun his destiny, yet it is well to do nothing without precaution.

It is a double present when given with a cheerful countenance.

Nobility is nothing unless supported by good actions.

Evil speaking and calumny never quit their hold till they have destroyed the innocent on whom they have once seized.

Consider your estate, and leave playing and jesting to children.

Soft words may appease an angry man; bitter words never will.

Would you throw fire on a house in flames to extinguish them?

Continue to speak the truth, though you know it to be hateful.

It is a blessing to a house to have a number of guests at table.

Five things are useless when they are not accompanied each with another thing: advice without effect; riches without economy; science without good manners; almsgiving to improper objects, or without a pure intention; and life without health.

If you wish your enemy never to know your secret, never divulge it to your friend.

Art thou a man in honor? Wouldst thou live without inquietude or remorse? Then do actions worthy of thy character.

When subjects are ill treated by subaltern officers, and cannot make remonstrances to the prince, because the too great authority of ministers of state deprives them of the means; their lot is like to that of a man who, half dead with thirst, approaches the river Nile to drink; but perceiving a crocodile, is obliged to perish for lack of water, or submit to be devoured.

It is better to perish with hunger, than to deprive the poor of their bread.

If you be reproved for your faults, do not be angry with him who does it: but turn your anger against the things for which he has reproved you.

Poisonous food is preferable to bad discourse.

Do not discover the faults of others, if you be unwilling to have your own known.

Wage war against yourself, and you will thereby acquire true peace of soul.

One resembles those the company of whom he most frequents.

The best expended riches are those which are given for God's sake.

If you have a dispute with any person, take heed that you say not of him all the evil which you know; otherwise you will leave no room for accommodation.

Your conversation is the index of your intellect, and your actions show the bottom of your heart.

It is more difficult to manage riches well, than to acquire them.

The grandeur of kings is evidenced in the administration of justice.

Honour your parents, and your children will honor you.

Cultivate no friendship with him who loves your enemy.

If you have a friend who takes offense at trifles, break entirely with him, for he is not to be trusted.

The happiness of life is only to be found, when the conscience is pure and clean.

Measure every man with his own measure; i.e., "Do not expect or require from him more than is in him."

Can any man boast who considers what he is come from?

In whatever corner of the world you are, you will have something to suffer.

It will be more profitable for thee to adorn thy inside than thy outside.

THE WORDS OF LOCKMAN TO HIS SON

My son, I wish thee to observe these six maxims which comprehend all the morality of the ancients and moderns.

1. Have no attachment to the world, but in proportion to the short duration of thy life.
2. Serve God with all that fervor which the need thou hast of him demands.
3. Labor for the other life that awaits thee and consider the time it must endure.
4. Strive to escape that fire, out of which those who are once cast in can never escape.
5. If thou hast temerity enough to sin, measure beforehand the strength thou shalt require to endure the fire of hell, and the chastisements of God.
6. When thou wishest to transgress, seek for a place where God cannot see thee.